

Psalm 114:1–8

Translation, Logoprosodic Analysis, and Observations

Recalling YHWH’s “Holy War” (Exodus-Conquest)

Psalm 114:1–8

A. *When Israel Came Out of Egypt, Judah Became His Sanctuary* (114:1–2) [4.4]

114:1	When Israel came out / from Egypt //	13	2	3	3	0
	the house of Jacob / from a people of strange language //	<u>13</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>
		113:7–114:1		27	17	10

114:2	Judah became / ^a his sanctuary //	14	2	3	3	0
	Israel / his dominion //	<u>11</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
		113:8–114:2		26	20	12

B. *The Sea/Jordan Fled and the Mountains Skipped Like Rams* (114:3–4) [4.4]

114:3	The sea looked / and fled //	12	2	3	3	0
	the Jordan / turned back //	<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
		113:9–114:3		26	17	9

114:4	The mountains / skipped like rams //	15	2	3	3	0
	the hills / were like young sheep //	<u>10</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
		114:2–4		17	9	8

C. *Why Did You Flee, Sea/Jordan as Mountains Skipped Like Rams?* (114:5–6) [4.4]

114:5	What is it with you, O sea / that you fled? //	12	2	5	5	0
	O Jordan / that you turned back //	<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
		114:1–5		32	17	15

114:6	O mountains / that you skipped like rams //	14	2	3	3	0
	O hills / like young sheep //	<u>10</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
		114:3–4		26	14	12

D. *Tremble, O Earth, Before the God of Jacob!* (114:7–8) [4.4]

114:7	At the presence of YHWH / tremble, O earth //	15	2	4	4	0
	at the presence of / the God of Jacob //	<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
		114:2–7		38	21	17

114:8	The one who turned / the rock into a pool of water //	14	2	4	4	0
	the flint / into a fountain of water //	<u>13</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
		114:1–8		52	28	24

Scansion in Accentual Stress Units: (4.4).(4.4).(4.4).(4.4) = 16 + 0 + 16 = 32

Concentric Compositional Formula: 52 = 26 + 0 + 26 [word count]

Notes:

114:2^a Reading the sequence of two successive occurrences of *munah* in BHS as disjunctive.

Summary of the Logoprosodic Analysis

1. Psalm 114 has four strophes: 114:1–2, 3–4, 5–6 and 7–8.

A	114:1–2	2 balanced dyads:	[13 + 13] + [14 + 11]	= 26 + 25	morae
B	114:3–4	2 balanced dyads:	[12 + 12] + [15 + 10]	= 24 + 25	morae
B'	114:5–6	2 balanced dyads:	[12 + 12] + [14 + 10]	= 24 + 24	morae
A'	114:7–8	2 balanced dyads:	[15 + 12] + [14 + 13]	= 27 + 27	morae

2. The first strophe (114:1–2) is a single part arranged in two subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 114:1 and 2.

- 113:7–114:1 **17** words before *atnach*
- 113:8–114:2 **26** words

3. The second strophe (114:3–4) is a single part arranged in two subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 114:3 and 4.

- 114:2–4 **17** words
- 114:2–5 **17** words before *atnach*
- 114:1–5 **32** (= $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 2^5$) words

4. The third strophe (114:5–6) is a single part arranged in two subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 114:5 and 6.

- 113:6–114:5 **26** words after *atnach*
- 114–6 **23** words before *atnach*

5. The fourth strophe (114:7–8) is a single part arranged in two subdivisions on the basis of word-count.

- 114:4–8 **34** (= **17** x 2) words
- 114:2–8 **17** words after *atnach*
- 114:1–8 **52** (= **26** x 2) words

Observations

1. The content of the nine verses in the five strophes in Psalm 114 may be outlined in a menorah pattern, which is determined primarily on prosodic grounds, as follows:

A	When Israel came out of Egypt, Judah became his sanctuary	[4.4]	114:1–2
B	The Sea looked and fled; the Jordan turned back	[2.2]	114:3
C	The mountains skipped like rams; the hills like young sheep	[2.2]	114:4
X	What ails you, O Sea/Jordan, that you fled?	[2.2]	114:5
C'	The mountains skipped like rams; the hills like young sheep	[2.2]	114:6
B'	Tremble, O earth, before the God of Jacob!	[2.2]	114:7
A'	He turned the rock into a pool of water	[2.2]	114:8

2. In terms of the 52 words in Psalm 114, the **arithmological center** falls between the two words לַךְ הַיָּם ("to you [belongs] the sea") in 114:5a. The initial concentric compositional formula is:

$$52 = 26 + 0 + 26 \quad [\text{word count}]$$

If the two words in the center of Psalm 114 are taken as the **meaningful center**, the **concentric compositional formula** becomes:

$$52 = 25 + 2 + 25 \quad [\text{word count}]$$

The **meaningful center** may be expanded by including five words on either side of the **arithmological center**, as follows:

	גבעות כבני צאן	The hills were like young sheep.
	מה לַךְ הַיָּם כי תנוס	What ailed you, O Sea, that you fled;
	הירדן תסב	O Jordan, that you turned (back).

The corresponding **compositional formula** then becomes:

$$52 = 21 + 10 + 21 \quad [\text{word count}]$$

The **meaningful center** may be expanded further by including eight words on either side of the **arithmological center**, as follows:

4	ההרים רקדו כאילים	The mountains skipped like rams;
	גבעות כבני צאן	The hills were like young sheep.
5	מה לַךְ הַיָּם כי תנוס	What ailed you, O Sea, that you fled;
	הירדן תסב לאחור	O Jordan, that you turned back,
6	ההרים תרקדו	O mountains, that you skipped?

The corresponding **compositional formula** then becomes:

$$52 = 18 + 16 + 18 \quad [\text{word count}]$$

$$\{52 = 26 \times 2\}$$

3. The 10-word “nested framework” (with the 7-word framework underlined) reads as follows:

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| 1 | <u>בצאת ישראל ממצרים</u> | <u>When Israel came out of Egypt.</u> |
| | <u>בית יעקב מעם לעז</u> | <u>The house of Jacob from a people of strange tongue.</u> |
| 2 | היתה יהודה לקדשו | Judah became his sanctuary. |
| | מלפני אלֹהֵי יעקב | At the presence of the God of Jacob, |
| 8 | <u>ההפכי חצור אגם־מים</u> | <u>The one who turned the rock into a pool of water.</u> |
| | <u>חלמיש למעינו־מים</u> | <u>The flint into a fountain of water.</u> |

4. Summary of the concentric compositional formulae:

$$52 = 25 + 2 + 25 \quad \text{word-count}$$

$$52 = 21 + 10 + 21$$

{with others in between}

$$52 = 10 + 32 + 10$$

$$52 = 7 + 38 + 7$$

$$32 = 16 + 0 + 16 \quad \text{SAS (syntactic accentual-stress) units}$$

$$16 = 8 + 0 + 8 \quad \text{briques (primary SAS units)}$$

5. In the prosodic structure of Psalm 114, the basic building blocks (**briques**) in each poetic **verset** are the **primary SAS (syntactic accentual stress) units**. These sub-units are delineated by the Masoretes, who marked most of the boundaries with one of the following:

- **Soph Pasuq** A large colon following a word signifies the end of a verse, which does not always coincide with the end of a sentence.
- **Atnach** A small caret-like mark (like ^) beneath the consonantal text, pointing upward, is used to divide most verses. Its primary importance for our purposes concerns its use in the matter of numerical composition—i.e., the total word-count in each line is divided into the number of words before and after *atnach*.
- **Ole Weyored** A combination of two accentual signs: a caret-like mark above the consonantal text, pointing to the left, used together with the accent *merka* (an upright line beneath the consonantal text slanting to the right). These two marks usually appear on the same word, but when that word is monosyllabic the *merka* falls on the following word. This major divider is usually considered to be a stronger disjunctive accent than *atnach*.

In the prosodic analysis presented in the translation (above), the presence of these three markers is indicated with a double slash (/). Psalm 114 has 16 **briques** (primary stress units), all of which are marked by *soph pasuq* (8 times, at the end of each verse), *atnach* (8 times, in each verse).

6. The prosodic structure of Psalm 114, in terms of its primary SAS units (**briques**), may be displayed as follows [^ represents *atnach*; : represents *soph pasuq*; † represents *ole weyored*, and † represents all other accent markers]: as follows:

A	¹ <i>bəṣēṭ yisrāʿēl mimmiṣrāyim</i> ^	<i>bēt yaʿāqōḇ mēʿam lōʿēz :</i>
	² <i>hāyətāh yəhūḏāh ləqodšō</i> ^	<i>yisrāʿēl mamšəlōṭāyw :</i>
B	³ <i>hayyām rāʾāh wayyānōs</i> ^	<i>hayyardēn yisssōḇ ləʾāḥōr :</i>
	⁴ <i>hehārīm rāqəḏū kəʾēlīm</i> ^	<i>gəbāʿōṭ kibnē šōʾn :</i>
B'	⁵ <i>mah</i> <i>ləka hayyām</i> <i>kī tānūs</i> ^	<i>hayardēn tissōḇ ləʾāḥōr :</i>
	⁶ <i>hehārīm tirqəḏū kəʾēlīm</i> ^	<i>gəbāʿōṭ kibnē šōʾn :</i>
A'	⁷ <i>millipnē ʾādōn ḥūlī ʾāreṣ</i> ^	<i>millipnē ʾēlōah yaʿāqōḇ :</i>
	⁸ <i>hahōpəkī haṣṣūr ʾāgam māyim</i> ^	<i>ḥallāmīš ləmaʿyanō māyim :</i>

7. The 16 **briques** (primary SAS units) are distributed in 3 **strophes** in Psalm 114 as follows: 16 = (4 + 4) + (4 + 4).
8. The **arithmological center** of Psalm 114 falls between the words *ləka hayyām* (“to you [belongs] the sea”) in 114:5a, with **26** words on either side. Psalm 114 has 32 SAS units, 16 **briques** (primary SAS units), 8 **versets**, and 3 **strophes**. The **arithmological center** is in the middle two **strophes**, the middle two **versets**, the middle two **briques**, and the middle two SAS units. There are 202 morae in Psalm 114—with 103 before the **arithmological center** and 99 morae after it.
9. Terrien finds 4 strophes in Psalm 114 (*The Psalms* [2003], pp. 766–67.) The analysis presented here, which is based on the balance in mora-count and the concentric pattern in the distribution of syntactic accentual stress units, indicates that there are four strophes and that the middle two are closely connected.

Christensen	Terrien
A 114:1–2	1 114:1–2
B 114:3–4	2 114:3–4
B' 114:5–6	3 114:5–6
A' 114:7–8	4 114:7–8

10. According to John Wheeler, the reason that there is no central strophe is almost certainly that this Psalm is unusually antiphonal in structure, both melodically and verbally (perhaps I should say more precisely, both melodically and semantically). SHV inferred two alternating choruses used straight through. As it happens, the division into four strophes fits exactly with this pattern (that is, there would be one alternation of choruses per strophe). As a side note, SHV inferred that this Psalm was sung in a mode equivalent to our "major" mode. This mode is probably the least common in the Haik-Vantoura Psalms; most if not all of the relative few that use it all the way through are

this one, 8, 96, 97, 98, 100, 111, and 122. A few others (like Psalms 99 and 148) use it for just a few verses to end a strophe, larger musical section or the entire Psalm.”

11. The logoprosodic analysis of Psalm 114 reveals the following list of significant compositional numbers at the boundaries of the verses counting from the beginning:

114:1–5 **32** words
114:1–6 **23** words before *atnach*
114:1–8 **52** (= **26** x 2) words

It is not possible to utilize any of the four compositional numbers (**17**, **23**, **26** and **32**) until the end of verse 3, which leaves six possible boundaries to work with. In 3 out of 6 of these boundaries (or 50% of the time) a multiple of one of these four compositional numbers is present. This evidence suggests the possibility of deliberate design at the point of the numerical composition of Psalm 114.

12. If Book 2 (Psalms 42–72) was added to an original Deuteronomistic Psalter to form the Pentateuchal Psalter as we now have it that numbered **119** (= **17** x **7**) psalms, then Psalm 114 was originally Psalm 83 (114 less 31).

13. Determining the details of the musical and literary structures of Psalm 114 as a whole calls for input on the part of others in the BIBAL Forum, as we consider the rhetorical features in greater depth and further information contained in the *te'amim* of this particular text.

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